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Letter dated 28 February 2002 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of an appeal of the Khojaly refugees addressed to the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in connection with the tenth anniversary of the Khojaly genocide perpetrated by Armenian forces in February 1992 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yashar **Aliyev**
Chargé d'affaires

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Annex to the letter dated 28 February 2002 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Appeal by the Khojaly refugees addressed to the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

In appealing to the United Nations, the Council of Europe (CE) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which are authoritative international organizations, our objective is to bring to the attention of world public opinion the truth about the Khojaly genocide perpetuated by Armenians in the Nagorny Karabakh region of Azerbaijan in February 1992 and to ensure that this bloody crime is given a political assessment.

Any person who is more or less acquainted with the history of Azerbaijan knows that the town of Khojaly, which is situated in the mountainous part of Karabakh and has existed from the third millennium before the Common Era, is one of the ancient settlements of Azerbaijan. The unique archaeological finds and historic monuments discovered during excavations carried out in the territory of the town of Khojaly are clear proof of this.

The Armenians, who erected a monument in 1978 in the Nagorny Karabakh region on the occasion of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the resettlement of their ancestors from Persia to Azerbaijan, have, in order to achieve the realization of the illusion of "Greater Armenia" at the expense of the historic lands of Azerbaijan, consistently carried out over the past two centuries, with the help of their patrons abroad, an aggressive policy directed against Azerbaijan and, at different periods, have not disdained such crimes against humanity as monstrous acts of terror, mass bloodshed, deportation and genocide in order to attain this insidious goal.

Numerous historical documents demonstrate that millions of Azerbaijanis, who were subjected, during the years 1905-1907, 1918-1920 and 1948-1953, to a policy of ethnic cleansing and genocide in their historic ethnic territories, were in massive numbers murdered and deported from the lands of their fathers and grandfathers. Beginning in 1988, the unfounded territorial claims against Azerbaijan were again put forward, Armenian separatism raised its head, and the Nagorny Karabakh provocation, which has no historical, political or ethnic basis to support it, was initiated. In 1998 and 1999, more than 250,000 Azerbaijanis, who had lived in their historic ethnic lands in Armenia, were all deported, and hundreds of peaceful inhabitants were brutally murdered. As a result, Armenia became a monoethnic republic, which had been the dream of Armenians for years.

Unfortunately, the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, which began in 1988 for no reasons other than territorial ones, the Armenian reaction that was raging in Azerbaijani territories and the sufferings of the peaceful Azerbaijani population that was the victim of this reaction were met with indifferent silence on the part of the leaders of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the civilized world. The Armenians were encouraged by this and, making use of the situation,

resorted to a policy of genocide against Azerbaijanis and committed unprecedented historic crimes, one after the other. Armenia's armed forces occupied 20 per cent of the territory of Azerbaijan, including seven administrative districts that were not part of the Nagorny Karabakh region; more than a million Azerbaijanis were barbarously expelled from their native lands, and tens of thousands of people were murdered, maimed and taken hostage. Hundreds of settlements and thousands of public and cultural buildings, educational and health-care institutions, cultural and historic monuments, mosques, holy places of pilgrimage and cemeteries were obliterated from the face of the earth and subjected to unprecedented vandalism by Armenians.

The tragedies, terror and mass bloodshed perpetuated by Armenian armed units during the first years of the conflict in Karabakh villages such as Kyarkijahan, Meshali, Gushchular, Garabagly, Agdaban and others where Azerbaijanis lived, and, finally, the Khojaly genocide are historic crimes which will remain forever as a black stain on the consciences of the "long-suffering Armenians".

On 26 February 1992, the Khojaly genocide was added to the list of such crimes against humanity as Khatyn, Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Song My, which are considered the most monstrous tragedies of the century.

On the night of 25/26 February 1992, Armenian armed units, directly supported by the 366th regiment of the former USSR, stationed at that time in the town of Khankendi (Stepanakert), attacked, from five directions, the town of Khojaly, where approximately 7,000 Azerbaijanis were living. At the time of the attack, there were about 3,000 inhabitants in the town. By that time, Khojaly had already been under siege by Armenian armed subdivisions for more than four months. The town's inhabitants were in desperate need of medical assistance and food, and among them there were many sick and wounded people, elderly persons, and women and children.

The unrestrained Armenian bandit units, with the help of their foreign patrons, virtually obliterated Khojaly from the face of the earth that night. With the support of numerous heavy combat weapons and materiel belonging to the 366th regiment, the town was completely destroyed and burned down. The unarmed peaceful civilian population was subjected to monstrous butchery. Children, women, elderly people and sick persons were destroyed with unprecedented brutality. At the end of the twentieth century, Armenians had perpetrated yet another historic crime — the Khojaly genocide, which became a black stain on the conscience of civilized mankind. The purpose of this monstrous act was to destroy the town's entire population. Nevertheless, some of the inhabitants of Khojaly, by sheer chance, remained alive in order to bear witness for history.

As a result of this latest case of genocide, the Khojaly genocide, perpetrated by Armenians against the Azerbaijani people, 613 persons were murdered and 1,275 from among the peaceful inhabitants were taken hostage. To this day, the fate of 150 of them is unknown. As a result of the tragedy, more than 1,000 peaceful inhabitants, who received bullet wounds of varying degrees of severity, became invalids; 106 women, 83 small children, and 70 elderly persons were killed. Seventy-six of those who became invalids were boys and girls who had not yet come of age.

As a result of this military and political crime, eight families were completely destroyed, 25 children lost both parents, and 130 children lost one parent. Fifty-six persons were burned alive with particular cruelty and brutality, they were scalped, their heads were severed, and their eyes thrust out, and the stomachs of pregnant women were stabbed repeatedly with bayonets.

It is difficult to imagine that such cruelty and acts of brutality perpetrated by man, which have no parallel in history, occurred at the end of the twentieth century, before the eyes of the entire world! However, the world must know: the perpetrators of this historic crime, directed not only against the Azerbaijanis, but also against all civilized mankind, are the "long-suffering Armenians".

For the past 10 years, we the people of Khojaly, living as refugees with pain and at the same time great hope in our hearts, appeal to all peace-loving peoples on earth and to international organizations. We ask you not to remain indifferent and unconcerned about the suffering caused to us and our grief as a result of Armenian armed aggression. We do not believe that such authoritative international organizations like the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and peace-loving countries are unable to force such an aggressive State like Armenia, which is imposing its will on the international community, to observe justice and order!

We are certain that the world community will condemn the military aggression by the Armenian State against Azerbaijan and will assist in ensuring the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, bringing about the return of more than a million refugees to their homes, and achieving a peaceful settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict in the context of historic political justice.

We, the people of Khojaly, experienced profound sorrow upon learning of the monstrous terrorist attack that led to the mass destruction of thousands of innocent people in the United States of America on 11 September 2001. This terrible tragedy brought us back to the events that took place a decade earlier. Ten years ago, we, the people of Khojaly, and tens of thousands of Azerbaijanis personally experienced such terrible grief, and today we are living in tents, train carriages, dugouts, and cellars, sharing the bitter fate of refugees.

We, the witnesses of the Khojaly genocide, who by a miracle remained alive, strongly condemn the terrorist acts of 11 September and, with great hope, once again appeal to the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe as well as all progressive world public opinion and once more draw their attention to the need for a political and legal assessment of the Khojaly genocide as well.

We, the people of Khojaly, who endured one of the most terrible tragedies of the twentieth century, call upon the peoples of the world to undertake a joint struggle for peace and security. We sound the alarm and call upon all international organizations and peace-loving, authoritative States in the world to mobilize all forces to eliminate the hotbeds of war throughout the world and to struggle for a free, happy human society, living in conditions of peace and tranquillity and prospering with every new day!

This appeal was adopted at a meeting of the refugees of the Khojaly district

20 February 2002